

The Assurance of Faith; or the Experience of a True Christian.

BEING THE 4455. a 8
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SUBSTANCE
OF A
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT
GLENEVY in the County of ANTRIM
in IRELAND,

In the YEAR 1754. K

By JOHN CENNICK.

Let us draw near with full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, HEB. x. 22.

THE THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

Printed and sold by H. TRAPP, No. 1, Paternoster-Row. 1786.

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GLINNEY
BY
J. A. 1784



BY JOHN C. N. I. C. A.
Let us draw near with full assurance of faith, have-
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have full communion with him, and be made perfect in
his love.

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ISAIAH xxxviii. 17.

*Thou hast in love to my soul delivered
it from the pit of corruption, for
thou hast cast all my sins behind thy
back.*

THESE words are a part of that writing which Hezekiah the good king of Israel wrote after a recovery from sickness, and is a sort of a song of thanksgiving, and a relation of his happy experience, viz. of his own natural estate, and of the work of conversion on his heart.

I prize this portion of holy scripture the more, because under the law, the believer generally walked in a cloud, and but few seemed permitted to look behind the veil, and to experience the blessedness which, through the gospel, is every child of God's proper right and privilege.

From Moses until Christ, that veil which was upon all nations darkened the Israelites also, and in great measure overshadowed the whole church of God which was among the Jews; and only a small number of choice and chosen men and women, such as the prophets, and those who believed their

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report,

report, had true ideas of the kingdom and redemption of him that should come; and hence it was that the prophets who spoke plainly of Christ, and who having searched diligently and found out the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, in a sort of extasy and rapture uttered the glad news, were as coldly received, and often, if not always, the most persecuted and most despised of their time.

The truth was, they could not relish the testimony of the men inspired, but liked rather to hear of being the greatest people in the world, to be prospered in all their wars, to be rich, to reign, to enjoy a flow of milk and honey, and to abound in all plenty, and to have kings among themselves whose dominions should have no end, and to see all the heathen hewers of wood, and drawers of water subject to them. They loved this world, and erred in their hearts about the world to come; and this made their chief minister sigh over them, when he was finishing his course, "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." They were as too many of us are, fond of things temporal, and careless of things eternal; lovers of the shadows, but thoughtless and inadvertent in the substance.

But stiff-necked and disobedient as they were there were among them in all ages, men, who like Hezekiah, sought after the best riches, and who followed the example of their fathers, "counting themselves in the world strangers and pilgrims, and looking for a heavenly country and a city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God."

These

These sought and found the Lord : These received the remission of their sins, and their songs of praise are often filled with expressions of the assurance of faith. These abound among the Psalms, which however collected by the sweet finger of Israel, are not his alone, but the work of many saints who with him partook of the same faith and were illuminated by the same Paraclete and Comforter.

It is easy to prove out of the Psalms of David and others, as well as out of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah, that they who believed truly in our Saviour, though so far off, knew their sins were forgiven and blotted out, to be remembered no more ; and this grace they prophesied should come unto us : But there is something particularly beautiful in that writing of Hezekiah, out of which I have been reading. It is to me a solid and weighty account of God's dealings with him, and tallies with the experience of all true christians in the world.

Three things are particularly to be observed in his relation.

First, The distress he was in before our Saviour spoke peace to him and delivered him from his sins.

Secondly, The assurance he had of being pardoned, and accepted by his heavenly Father, and saved ; and how boldly he testifies that this must be the case with all the children of God.

Thirdly

Thirdly, The cause of all; which he says, was the love of Jehovah to him: of each of these let me speak a little.

And first, I will mention his distress. He was outwardly troubled with sickness; and within with fears and heaviness: he wept sore for fear of dying, and was in bitterness about his peace with God. He expected every morning to be cut off, through a grievous boil that caused his illness; and every evening he dreaded more than meeting a lion, that the Lord would remove him, while a more heavy burden lay on his heart; for he doubted if he should ever see the Lord in the land of the living. There are few lovers of Jesus who read this pathetic writing but with tears in their eyes think, 'Ah dear Saviour so it was with me; thus I thought once; this was my case. I cried and mourned alone. I sat moping and grieving in secret like a dove. I seemed to sigh unregarded, like the swallow that chatters alone on the house-top. I was in pain for a Saviour; I mourned for him as one mourneth for his only son. I was in bitterness for him whom I had pierced, as one is in bitterness for his first-born.'

Thus it was with poor Hezekiah; nor was he comforted till the Lord pitied him, and saw his tears, and sent mercy and pardon to him. **O** this was a happy sickness, a sanctified visitation! For this little moment's affliction he shall thank the Lamb to all eternity. It was grievous for a few days, but had the desired effect, and helped to lay him low at the throne of grace; and now behold

behold he who turned to the wall upon his bed and wept, he who dreaded to be consumed, and expected daily when the Lord would make an end of him, is now in peace. He has found a merciful Saviour, and is with him; he once trembled to think he should behold men no more, and be no more with the inhabitants of the world: now he sees the Son of man, and is with the inhabitants of the world above. O that sickness might thus be blessed to all those who pine away with it! They have much time, and are released from the employments and hurrying business of this life; O that they would turn to him "who himself bore their sicknesses and carried their infirmities," and pray him to help them to the place where sickness, sorrow and pain is no more, and where all tears are wiped away from their eyes. They may have many or few to comfort them with hopes of doing well again, recovering their health, &c. but till they have the assurance of their part in Jesus Christ, they need the right Comforter, and are without the best Friend: Had they his presence, then, when none else were near to comfort them, he would be near, and to have him is better than life, and to die in him is gain.

It is very common for persons, before their assurance of the love of Christ, to be in misery and sore afflicted. To me it would be a great proof that a man was unconverted, who never knew what it was to be so pained at his very heart, so concerned about his soul's future welfare, that he could not rest or be easy. Such who sleep on and take their rest, and never experience that distress, which our Saviour calls "hungering and thirsting,

ing, being weary and heavy laden, being ready to perish, &c." were never awakened, they are in a carnal security and dead to the divine life, dead to the faith, dead to the Lord, and to their own souls. They deserve that character in the prophet, "Careless and at ease in Sion." But though in general children of God in this sense, thro' much tribulation enter the kingdom; yet there are instances of some who have been so drawn by love, and carried so like lambs in the Shepherd's bosom, that they are excused from much pain, and saved from many sorrows; yet altogether are they not strangers to that heart-uneasiness which I have been speaking about. Many have therefore called it the pangs of the new birth, and our Saviour himself so compares it, John [xvi. 20.]

Who can forbear to be uneasy when the Holy Spirit awakes him from his dangerous sleep, shews him his wicked heart and life, sets before him in order his sins, and how great wrath he justly deserves? Who, unregenerate and conscious of his being a natural and carnal man, can do otherwise than shudder when he knows he must die, and after that come to judgment; and when he feels that if he should be called away as he is, he must perish in eternal burnings, and be numbered among foolish virgins, hypocrites and unbelievers? But what can pierce still deeper and cut with more intense pain, is the conviction that we have slighted Christ, slighted and disesteemed his person and merits, his sufferings and blood, his shame and humiliation, his labour and servitude, and as it were, trampled under foot the holy things where-with he redeemed us; besides denying and re-
fusing

fusing the tender calls of his Spirit, and rejecting his convictions. These reflections, when the eyes of the soul are opened, cause inexpressible sadness and grief. These make the heart sink, and the tears flow day and night, this makes the stoutest tremble and sigh, nor can all the world cure them whose eyes God has thus enlightened.

In the same manner when he has touched those deaf ears "which refused to hear the voice of the charmer," and said Ephatha, they no more listen to the scriptures with a cold or untouched or unaffected heart, but the thunders of Mount Sinai make the marrow in their bones quake; and then often betwixt satan who labours hard to disturb, discourage and perplex them, carnal friends with their threatenings and promises, false teachers with their smooth doctrines and self-righteousness, and their own more false and deceitful hearts, they are overwhelmed with trouble and confusion, and for fear, lest amidst all those dangers they should lose eternal life, they are brought to the very sharpest pain, and deepest distress. An unusual thoughtfulness makes them heavy, and temptations and many groundless suggestions dishearten them to the last degree, but all this in the end makes them resolve to cast themselves down before our dear Saviour's feet with this determination, "If I perish, I will perish there."

Souls in this case are to be pitied, but they are safe, they are in good hands; he who sweat blood in his agony knows the right time to help, and he who brought them to the birth, will surely give strength to bring forth. Nor can I believe a soul

who sincerely wants salvation, and who more than all things dreads being parted from our Saviour or his love, will perish; they may have fears, but he will deliver them out of all. Who reads the psalms which were the experience of David and others under the Old Testament, and who thinks only on the reason why Paul, after he was so shocked at his entry into Damascus, could neither eat or drink for three days and nights, but continued praying, will not be surprised if a soul in our time should be so broken and cast down under a sense of his sin and want of Jesus. The behaviour of Mary, the thief, those who were pricked to the heart under Peter's discourse at Pentecost, the jailor at Philippi, and many others are only instances of this kind; and as I said before, Hezekiah is far from being the only person who fell under such a concern, as made him express the language of his heart in such a manner; for all the children of God drink of it. Jesus has drank up the dregs. He has taken the bitter draught, the wormwood and the gall, and he lets us pledge him.

It is both safe, and also an honour to us that we have thus been tried. Safe, because when souls are thus stripped of all our false hopes, their legal righteousness, and fancied goodness, they see, feel, and are assured of their own vileness, inability, and lost estate; and are divinely assured that they must perish for ever and ever, unless Jesus out of free mercy and mere pity and compassion should help them. They are, as it were, in the deep mire and clay, in the shadow of death, on the verge and brink of hell, and know nothing less than

than a miracle of grace can deliver them. This is safe for them; for thus does the Holy Ghost do with them, to bring them off entirely from all self-goodness, and from every hope from angels and men, to fly to the cross as poor, guilty, condemned and hell-deserving wretches, at whose heels the avenger of blood pursues with all his terrors. This is safe for them when they have found mercy, for they are saved from ascribing any thing to their own deservings, and to their own merits; they know, they remember well (when a self-righteous thought rises, or any thing that would be self-admiring, or self-pleasing stirs) what a lamentable, helpless and ruined condition they were in, when Jesus saw their tears, heard their cries, he had pity on their pain, and delivered them; and this makes them thank, and adore, and love him, on whose head are many crowns, and with shame and deepest gratitude they lay all the glory of their salvation and happiness at his feet, who only is worthy to receive blessing and thanksgiving, because he was slain.

It is an honour; for thereby we taste a little, we sip of the cup which he drank, and can guess, with some justness, what our dear Lord felt, when the sins of all were laid on him. We do not really taste the wrath of God, nor the punishment; for that the Lamb took on himself and bore alone; but what we experience is in apprehension, and is somewhat of that distress and amazement which Jesus shared so powerfully when he foresaw what he must undergo for his poor people, when the cup ready mixed was held out, and when his sweat was like blood.

This

This also learns us to prize the redemption. We reflect with eternal joy, from what a death has he delivered us !

There is, at the same time, a danger in this awakened state, of which I have been treating. A soul can value itself on account of what it has sustained, and despise them who have not been tried in the same way, or who have not so long laboured in the fire. This is from the old root of self-righteousness, and is unseemly in the eyes of Jesus, and odious in the sight of a soul truly converted.

Very often the stubbornness of a soul, the being loath to part with all its own holiness, its hardness of heart, and false knowledge, causes it much trouble, and creates it much unnecessary uneasiness. Did a soul directly, on the sight of its own lost state, fly to our Saviour, and with all simplicity believe in him, it would escape and get out of the hands of the adversary, and before the spirit of the law could assault, or terrify, or satan tempt, or the avenger reach them, they would get into the city of refuge, and so be out of the reach of all perplexity. Let then, whoever is troubled in mind, concerned about being happy, or afraid of miscarrying, immediately apply to the Lamb; they will never be more fit to come to him, than in the moment they are sensible of their poverty and sinfulness. When is a man more fit to go to the surgeon, than when wounded and with his bones dislocated and broken? When is a person more fit for the physician, than when exceeding sick? When

When does the sinner more need a Saviour, than when ready to perish? May every trouble, every sickness, every conviction bring you and me to the feet of Jesus Christ! So it was with Hezekiah, when presently his sickness of body and soul took a turn. He was almost overcome with his misery, and with his heart ready to burst, when he cried out "Lord, I am oppressed! undertake for me." Our Saviour heard, and knew the time was come to deliver him, and immediately did undertake for him, and released him at once from the sickness of his body, and the sin of his soul; and thus he does to all souls in like distress. When they turn their faces and hearts to him, when they have done with all other hopes, refuges and helps, and pray to him alone, one may safely say to such, "Ye are not far from the kingdom of God." Ye are nigh to be delivered indeed. Your salvation slumbereth not, and your redemption lingereth not.

O if there be any who hear me, who are oppressed, lay hold on the horns of this altar, and use Hezekiah's availing prayer, "Lord I am oppressed, undertake for me. I am in a perilous condition, beset on every side, O take my part! I am a debtor, undertake for me: Thou canst free and set me at liberty, for against thee only have I sinned; and thou, Lord, if thou wilt, canst make me clean. I am like a poor man who has had a suit at the bar, undertake for me. Thou mighty Counsellor advise me, thou almighty Advocate, plead my cause, and gain my suit." This do out of the bottom of thy heart, and thou shalt prove that true of Jesus: "He is a friend of publicans and sinners."

But

But now it is time that I speak on the second thing remarkable in Hezekiah's writing, and that is, the assurance he had of his being pardoned and forgiven.

"Behold (he says) for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast, in love to my soul, cast all my sins behind thy back." This is generally the language of a pardoned and accepted sinner. This is the joyful sound of them that come to Christ. This is the right and privilege of every believer in Jesus.

Let who will oppose this comfortable doctrine, it is true, and all who seek shall find it so; and they who oppose and contradict it, speak against the oracles of God, and the experience of his children. Unbelief has invented all the fallacious and delusive arguments against the assurance of faith; and because the far greatest part of mankind are void of this excellent gift, therefore those who would fain be accounted true christians, who have it not, are on the strongest side, and have the advantage of all the carnal and plausible reasons for their being safe, though ignorant of it; but they have no ground in the scriptures. There are swift witnesses against such as plead for walking in darkness, not knowing whither they are going. "Let us draw near," says the apostle, "with full assurance of faith." Another apostle exhorts the professors of christianity, "to make their calling and election sure." And John says, "that all the scriptures are written that men might believe on the name of the Son of God, and have eternal life through his name, and that they might know that they had eternal life." This is the nature of faith; it is itself the evidence of things
unseen

unseen, it is the substance of a hoped for heaven and eternal glory; it has always with it the eternal life which is in Jesus Christ. "All my people, saith the Lord, shall know me. We know him that is true. We know that when this earthly house is dissolved, we have a house with God, eternal in the heavens. I am persuaded, nothing shall separate us from the love of God. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself." But why need I rehearse so many scriptures, since all aim at nothing less than the believing soul might be happy here and hereafter? To ascertain this to the faithful, the Holy Ghost is given that he might comfort the children of God, shew them the things of Christ, glorify him, and dwell in them for ever. "He beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" He leads into all truth, he reveals the good things to us, which the eye hath not seen nor ear heard. He sheds abroad the love of God, seals to the day of redemption, and is the earnest of our everlasting inheritance.

The prophets and apostles would have been but poorly off, if they had not been assured of being happy for ever. The primitive christians would have had also but little encouragement to attempt the conversion of the heathen, if there had been no more certainty of eternal happiness in true christianity, than in the strict moral life of a heathen; nor could the martyrs, in all ages, have met death so chearfully and with songs of joy, if they had not had the assurance of faith, and thereby enjoyed Christ's love in them. But they had it, and every true believer has it also. Some insincerity at the bottom, some darling sin, or cherished unbelief hinders all who have it not. It is a

great gift, but not too great for him that bestows it. It is worthy of its Giver. It is the way in which he manifests himself to his children, as he does not unto the world; and must be sought for, for it is the hidden treasure, it is what no man knoweth saving him that receiveth it.

A truly poor sinner does not ask, How is it possible? How can this be? But because Jesus has promised it, he believes, and seeks, and finds it; while one, who has much knowledge in his head, thinks he has attained something great, and settles upon his lees, with his heart still among the fearful and unbelieving. Those above all others are to be blamed, who hinder souls to press after this blessedness. Surely they have it not themselves, for did they enjoy it, they would be eager to have all their hearers enjoy the same precious faith; but therein they shew how unwilling they are to think themselves mistaken, and unconverted. Surely they love darkness rather than light, and do not want to be undeceived, but are the blind leaders of the blind.

When they say, No one in this life can know our Saviour, or their sins forgiven; how have they read the scriptures? Why, with eyes that could not see, and they have heard it with ears that could not hear, and thought thereon with a heart that could not understand; for all the scriptures teach, that if any man says he has communion with God, and walks in darkness, he lieth. He that follows Christ shall not walk in darkness, he shall have the light of life. He shall know whither he goeth, and the way he shall know.

When

When they say, We cannot know till we die; how weak is their doctrine? for might not they affirm as well, that we should not know then? Who ever came from the dead to let us hear how it passed with them? Or where have the scriptures taught a lesson so carnal? If a believer in Christ does not know if he shall be happy till he dies, then wherein does he excel our holy faith? Or why is it preferable to that of the Turks, or the worshippers of Confucius? They who are sincere among these hope they shall be happy, but do not know it; and if we did not know, we and our religion are on a level with them and their darkness.

O adored be the Lamb, who is the Sun of righteousness in this benighted world! And who does not leave his flock like bewildered sheep, but is with them, dwells with them, and in them, comforts them, is sound of them, manifests himself to them, and gives them to know him.

Should he forgive us only then [when] we depart, he would lose his glory; for we could not praise him to others, nor tell to his honour what he had done for us; and therefore, full of joy Hezekiah breaks out, "The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth." As if he would have said, Should men not know thy forgiveness till death, then they could not praise thee before their children, nor tell of their experiencing thy grace and mercy. When once the body is laid to rest in the grave, it is too late to expect it to celebrate thy praises. They that go to the tomb, cannot relate thy

mercies, nor can they, who venture into eternity, without thy pardon, hope for thy truth ; but the “ living, the living, he shall praise thee,” as I to-day ; he shall tell his believing friends, his neighbours, “ O come hither, and hearken, and I will declare what God has done for my soul.” I was once in a poor way, I was in bitterness for want of peace with God my Saviour ; and, lo ! out of love to my soul, he has cast all my sins behind his back. Thus, he says, “ The Father shall make known thy truth to his children ; he shall tell them, I am a witness, my sons, my daughters, that salvation is in the Lord ; I have found so, I have sought his mercy, and experienced it in my heart, and therefore can lay my grey hairs with joy in the grave.

O dear people ! do not dream of enjoyments after death, who have been so negligent of your interest in our Saviour now in your life-time, as not to insure to yourselves his love and forgiveness. Do not fancy death, and after death, is the only right time to know his salvation : “ the living, the living, he shall praise him,” as Hezekiah did. Now is the right time to be assured that you shall go to heaven. “ Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” •

Only the assurance of faith renders this life happy and comfortable ; and at the same time entirely abolishes the fear of death and hell, and creates the truest love and thankfulness to our Saviour. As for such who wantonly and wildly confess, If they knew they should be saved, they would live in all manner of sins ; let them know, as long as they are in that mind, they shall never have

have it, nor heaven neither. They are on satan's side, and willing servants of sin.

A soul who has found this blessedness of faith, has far other thoughts. He loves our Saviour too dearly to grieve him, and prizes his dear-bought happiness too much, to forfeit the enjoyment of it one hour for all the world. Would to God all who name the name of Jesus, knew this faith! the earth would be a nether heaven and paradise.

Our walking in the assurance of faith with humility and real poverty of spirit, which always accompany it, not only has peace in respect of the confidence he has of being accepted of his heavenly Father, through his beloved Son Jesus; but he walks with God as Enoch and Noah did; he has (to use the New-Testament language) "communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son," and can speak to his dear Saviour as a child to his Father, and as a man talketh with his friend, so he converses, by prayer, continually with his Lord; and is familiar and intimate with God, who made and loved him beyond all he could ever ask or wish. he knows his Redeemer; he is acquainted with God, and at peace with him: an eternal covenant of peace is made and in force between him and the Lamb; the mountains may depart, and the hills be carried into the deep of the sea, but the covenant of peace, which the Lamb of God has established with him, shall not be removed, world without end; nor will our Saviour be angry with him any more, nor will he leave or forsake him, but the ark of his presence shall dwell with him, and he will be with him going out and coming in, and in all troubles, in all company, in all countries

tries and places the Lord himself will comfort him and give him rest. The dread of endless death, the gnawings of a guilty conscience, and the terrors of judgment to come and eternity, vanish out of his heart : the death of Christ has devoured up all other deaths, and his misery and pain has swallowed up and devoured all curses and dangers, so that the peace of God, Jesus Christ's own peace, and that which he has had from everlasting, rules in him ; and he trusts in the Lord, and is not afraid. For who can he fear ? because of what should he tremble ? the mighty God of Jacob, the omnipotent King of saints, the Lord of hell and death is on his side ! He has forgiven him ; who can lay to his charge, or impute folly to him ? The blood of the Lamb has washed him so white, that he, who could see no iniquity in Jacob, nor behold perverseness in Israel, looks on him as fair, " altogether fair, and without spot." Thus does he live blessed, and in the glorious liberty of the children of God. Thus he dwells safely alone, and enjoys the kingdom of God within himself ; while the noisy world are clamouring without ; and the nominal christians, and such as are not upright and sincere, through unbelief in Jesus, go unhappy, and miss the enjoyment of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and his presence and love in this world. This is the happiness of a disciple of Christ. Of this I am a witness ; and thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honour. Such honour have all his saints.

Such can say to enquiring souls, whose faces are towards Sion, I am the man who have been of

of all others, a sinner. I have lived careless and mistaken in the world, dead to God while I lived : but after I was awakened by the voice of my Beloved, I sought him with tears, and with a heart ready to break. I lay down in sorrow, and rose oppressed ; nor could eat or drink in peace, but was always fighting for mercy, and till the Lord shewed me mercy, and manifested himself to me ; and now I have found Him whom my soul loveth. I have my eyes open to his love ; I have found the Lord. I now live to him, and he lives in me. I am his, and he is mine,

But should it be asked, Is there then no danger of losing this happiness? Can a person, who has faith, sin no more? Yes, verily, there is danger ; for pardoned and beloved as the believer may be, yet he is a sinner, and will carry his old spoiled nature of flesh and blood to the grave. He must be as a centinel watching over it and its dead fruits ; for though he has a new heart and a new spirit, he has a sinful body, in which rise and stir the motions of sin, and which nothing can damp or overcome but the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. This keeps the soul low and ashamed, and obliges him to live a sort of life like martyrdom ; he feels desires and lusts which must be crucified ; and however they may be natural, and not so abominable in their first motions, yet they must be denied and mortified. They war against the soul, and are contrary to the chaste nature of the virgin-like Spouse, to whom the believer is wedded. All acts of carelessness, and especially any thing of disobedience, and refusing, or not heeding

heeding the tender rebukes and warnings of the Holy Spirit, lead into darkness: and when an unfaithfulness is allowed but a moment, it brings a cloud and vail over the sanctuary. This experience, as well as scripture, teaches the christian; and therefore, like David, he finds it good to hold fast by the Lord. He continues with Jesus, and will not stir from his cross and crucified person. It is his strong hold, his fortress and safeguard, his only refuge in any danger, his only secure place.

If a pardoned and absolved person should venture into any sort of unlawful love, unjust behaviour, worldly and carnal pleasures, he must not wonder if his tender Father visits his offences with a rod, and his sins with scourges: or should selfishness, pride, ones own righteousness, or the like, be indulged, he will suddenly feel a withdrawing of the powerful presence of our Saviour; and to perceive the heart cold toward him, or be conscious of an indifference to his merits, or to find any thing separate, though but for a little, between the Lamb and him, is worse to the soul than death, and far, far more to be dreaded by the sincere christian and true convert.

As none can rightly guess at his happiness, who is assured of his part and interest in Christ, but him who has the same; so none but one in his case can be capable of thinking what pain that heart can feel who has backslidden from its first love, and forfeited the sweet company of the beloved Jesus. It is indeed a heaven upon earth, to be

be in his favour, and to walk with him in peace; and a nether hell to feel the Lord departed, and withdrawn, grieved away. Like as Mary was happy and blessed at her Lord's feet, while he said, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee;" and was as miserable when she could not find him, but thought him taken away, and so continued seeking and weeping till he appeared to her again: So a faithful soul is in his right mind, in his right place, and would not change states with an angel, while he feels the love of God which transcends and surpasses knowledge in his heart; but weeps day and night if he can but imagine he has displeased the Saviour, and cannot rest or be comforted till anew our Saviour smiles and visits him, and restores his peace. Then all his tears are wiped away, and he learns with a tender heart "to go and sin no more."

But now I must speak in the third place, of the reason and cause of all this blessedness; and this is the pure unmerited love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus. "Out of love to my soul, Hezekiah says, he cast all my sins behind his back." There can be no other reason assigned for it; it could not have been our righteousness; we have none. It could not have been our merits; he purchased it for us before ever we were born. It is, as I said, grace, free grace; and this is constantly taught in the bible.

This should make every poor heart leap for joy. For though you have no goodness, no sort of inherent claim to this bliss, yet you are invited to come and take freely of it; nor need you be

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afraid. Jesus loves you freely, and though neither himself nor you can see any thing worth his notice in you, yet he loves you with everlasting love, and is not willing that you should perish, but have everlasting life. Come, then, all you that are poor in spirit, you that are self-condemned and guilty, you that are hungry, thirsty, and in want; yea, you worst of sinners, publicans and harlots, drunkards and winebibbers, sensualists and rioters; and above all, ye dear souls that have sought for righteousness under the law, with a troubled head and heart; and you that have been awakened to see your own spoiled and corrupted hearts, [so] that you have lost nearly all hope and courage; come ye to the Lamb, and he will ease you; he will undertake for you; he will cast all your sins behind his back, and put a new song in your mouth, even praises and thanksgiving to our God. O come boldly and in faith, nothing doubting. Open your mouth wide, and he will fill it. Ask any thing, and he will do it for you. Ask then the forgiveness of sins, and to be assured of your eternal happiness in him, and you shall receive it. So shall you be blessed here and for ever, and safe living and dying. Ye shall be witnesses of his love to your children, and to the rising generation; and in the Lord's own good time, ye shall go to him, and see him whom ye love so much here, and be for ever with him. Amen.

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